

THE WAR ON FREEDOM

This analysis of available evidence suggests the complicity of covert US government, military and intelligence groups in the events surrounding September 11, 2001.

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Editor's Note: The following article is extracted and edited from the concluding section of Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed's book, *The War on Freedom: How and Why America was Attacked, September 11, 2001* (<http://www.thewaronfreedom.com>). It is reprinted with permission of the Institute for Policy Research & Development, UK.

In examining any crime, a central question must be: "who benefits?" The principal beneficiaries of the destruction of the World Trade Center are in the United States: the Bush administration, the Pentagon, the CIA and FBI, the weapons industry, the oil industry. It is reasonable to ask whether those who have profited to such an extent from this tragedy contributed to bringing it about.

— Investigative journalist Patrick Martin

CONCLUSIONS

As far as the facts on record are concerned, the best explanation of them, in the opinion of this author, is one that points directly to US state responsibility for the events of September 11, 2001. A detailed review of the facts points not only to Kabul but to Riyadh, Islamabad and, most principally, Washington. Furthermore, in the opinion of this author, the documentation presented in this study strongly suggests, though not necessarily conclusively, that significant elements of United States government, military and intelligence agencies had extensive advance warning of the September 11 attacks, and in various ways had complicity in those attacks. This is certainly not a desirable inference, but it is one that best explains the available data.

This examination has found that a specific war on Afghanistan, to be launched in October 2001, had been planned for at least a year and, in general terms related to regional strategic and economic interests, had actually been rooted in at least four years of strategic planning. This planning, in turn, is the culmination of a decade of regional strategising. All that was required was a trigger for these war plans, which was amply provided by the tragic events of September 11.

We have also discussed compelling evidence that not only did US government, military and intelligence agencies anticipate what was going to happen on September 11, but no public warnings were given and no appropriate measures were taken. It is a fact that the American intelligence community received multiple authoritative warnings, both general and specific, of a terrorist attack on the US using civilian airliners as bombs, targeting key buildings located in the nation's capital and New York City, and likely to occur around early to mid September.

It is also a recorded fact that emergency response systems suffered consistently inexplicable failures on that day, allowing the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon to continue without an effective air response. A detailed investigation of the actual chronology of events on September 11 strongly suggests that this sort of massive systematic failure was possible only through wilful obstructions from key US government and military officials.

It is a documented fact that the Bush administration furthermore systematically blocked investigations of terrorists involved or strongly suspected of being involved—including Osama bin Laden, his family and suspect Saudi royals who support him—prior to September 11. Even after September 11, the Bush administration has continued to misdirect investigations and block pertinent inquiries, with the FBI concentrating futile efforts on Germany rather than Saudi Arabia—where, according to the late former FBI Deputy

Director John O'Neill, the real source of bin Laden's network lies. In particular, it is a documented fact that the Bush administration has sealed any inquiry into the complicity of the ISI [Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence] in the September 11 attacks.

Indeed, there is reason to believe that through the ISI, which has "close links" to the CIA and plays the role of a regional instrument of US interests, elements of US military intelligence may have had direct complicity in funding and supporting the terrorists who undertook the air attacks on September 11. This notion is supported by the fact that the ISI chief, who siphoned US\$100,000 to the alleged lead hijacker Mohamed Atta, resigned quietly under US pressure—thus avoiding a scandal produced by undue publicity, along with any accompanying demands for an investigation into the full extent of the ISI's role in September 11. It is a documented fact that the Bush administration, in applying pressure, has successfully protected the ISI from any further damaging revelations on its complicity in supporting those behind the air attacks, while also protecting the ex-chief of ISI himself.

By obstructing investigations of terrorists and by maintaining what effectively amounts to a covert financial, political and even military alliance with them, the Bush administration has effectively supported their activities. The objective of US policy has, furthermore, been focused principally on securing elite strategic and economic interests abroad, while deterring public understanding at home.

As shocking and horrifying as these conclusions are, they are based on an extensive analysis of events leading up to, during and after September 11, 2001. However, it is not the intent of this author to pretend that the conclusions outlined here are final. On the contrary, in the opinion of this author, these conclusions are merely the best available inferences from the available facts that have been so far unearthed. It is up to the reader to decide whether or not to agree with this assessment. Ultimately, this study is not concerned with providing a conclusive account but, rather, is intended to clarify the dire need for an in-depth investigation into the events of September 11 by documenting the facts.

The Facts as Documented

A summary of the facts on record, as documented in this study, is presented here:

- Both the United States and the [former] USSR are responsible for the rise of religious extremism, terrorism and civil war within Afghanistan since the 1980s. The US, however, is directly responsible for the cultivation of a distorted "jihadi" ideology that, along with US arms and training, fuelled the ongoing war and acts of terrorism within the country after the withdrawal of Soviet forces.

- The US approved of the rise of the Taliban and went on at least tacitly to support the movement, despite its egregious human rights abuses against Afghan civilians, in order to secure regional strategic and economic interests.

- The US government and military planned a war on Afghanistan prior to September 11 for at least a year, a plan rooted in broad strategic and economic considerations related to control of Eurasia, and thus the consolidation of unrivalled global US hegemony.

- The US government has consistently blocked investigations and inquiries of Saudi royals, Saudi businessmen and members of the bin Laden family implicated in supporting Osama bin Laden and terrorist operatives linked to him. This amounts, in effect, to protecting leading figures

residing in Saudi Arabia who possess ties with Osama bin Laden.

- The US government has consistently blocked attempts to indict and apprehend Osama bin Laden, thus effectively protecting him directly.

- The US government has allowed suspected terrorists linked to Osama bin Laden to train at US military facilities financed by Saudi Arabia as well as at US flight schools for years.

- High-level elements of the US government, military, intelligence and law enforcement agencies received numerous credible and urgent warnings of the September 11 attacks, which were of such a nature as to reinforce one another successively. Only a full-fledged inquiry would suffice to clarify in a definite manner why the American intelligence community failed to act on the warnings received. However, the nature of the multiple warnings received, along with the false claims by US intelligence agencies that they had no specific warnings of what was about to occur, suggests that the agencies indeed had extensive foreknowledge of the attacks but are now attempting to prevent public recognition of this.

- In spite of extensive forewarnings, the US Air Force emergency response systems collapsed systematically on September 11, in violation of the clear rules that are normally and routinely followed on a strict basis. This is an event that could only conceivably occur as a result of deliberate obstructions to the following of Standard Operating Procedures for emergency response.

- To succeed, such systematic obstructions could only be set in place by key US government and military officials.

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"Those cartels are really getting organised."

Both President Bush and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Myers displayed sheer indifference to the September 11 attacks as they were occurring, which further suggests their particular responsibility. Once again, a full-fledged inquiry is required into this matter.

- Independent journalists revealed that Mahmoud Ahmed, as ISI Director-General, had channelled US government funding to Mohamed Atta, described as the "lead hijacker" by the FBI. The US government protected Ahmed, and itself, by asking him to resign quietly after the discovery, thus blocking a further inquiry and a potential scandal.

- The events of September 11 have in fact been of crucial benefit to the Bush administration, justifying the consolidation of elite power and profit both within the US and throughout the world. The tragic events that involved the murder of thousands of innocent civilians were exploited by the US government to crack down on domestic freedoms, while launching a ruthless bombing campaign on the largely helpless people of Afghanistan, directly resulting in the further killing of almost double the number of civilians who died on 9-11.

Possible US Complicity in 9-11

There are several possible scenarios regarding the role of the US government that explain these facts. All of these possibilities, however, strongly suggest a significant degree of US complicity in the events of September 11. This does not imply that the US was involved in orchestrating the events of September 11 from start to finish, or that the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were "staged" by the US, or that those responsible were on a direct US payroll in receipt of direct US orders.

What it does mean is that the US government, through its actions and inactions, effectively facilitated the attacks, protected those responsible, blocked attempts to prevent the attacks, and maintained close political, financial, military and intelligence ties

to key figures who supported those responsible. Whether or not every stage of these policies was a result of deliberation, the role that the US government has played both historically and currently in key events leading up to and after September 11 strongly suggests US responsibility for those events.

At the very least, this amounts to complicity through negligence or omission, for the simple reason that the US government has systematically behaved with wilful recklessness, with sheer indifference as to the probable consequences in terms of loss of American lives, in the pursuit of strategic and economic interests. Furthermore, the consistent and indeed systematic manner in which these policies have been implemented, even in the aftermath of September 11, also suggests deliberate complicity.¹

There is, of course, a context to this complicity, which establishes that the US relationship with Osama bin Laden is far more complex than conventional opinion would have us believe. The Saudi establishment appears to have been supporting bin Laden

largely as a form of bribery, payment of which secures the regime from being targeted by his network. In the words of the *New Yorker* (October 22, 2001), the regime is "so weakened and frightened that it has brokered its future by channelling hundreds of millions of dollars in what amounts to protection money to fundamentalist groups that wish to overthrow it". As a result, it has been specifically US interests, rather than those of the Saudi establishment, that have come under fire from such groups.

While the US seems to have been aware for many years of the Saudi establishment's involvement in funding Al-Qa'ida, successive administrations have deliberately allowed this to continue, motivated by concern for oil profits as secured through US hegemony over the Saudi regime, whose "stability"—meaning ongoing rule—must be preserved at any cost. It appears that this stability is worth preserving, even if the cost be the lives of American soldiers and civilians, abroad and at home.

Corporate elite interests, in other words, far outweigh alleged concerns for American lives. A documented precedent for this sort of policy is Al-Qa'ida's bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which, as Richard Labevière reports, did not interrupt the Clinton administration's indirect support of bin Laden's network, since "they figured the US would gain more from it in the long run". The same brand of considerations seems to have motivated the continuation and promotion of US ties with those responsible for supporting Al-Qa'ida, even in the aftermath of September 11—namely, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Simultaneously, it is also clear that US intelligence had anticipated Al-Qa'ida's terrorist plans for September 11 (at least to a general extent, but most probably to a highly specific degree), but continued to facilitate and support—from behind the scenes through its regional allies—the build-up to the implementation of those plans, while ensuring the lack of preventive measures at home both prior to and on September 11. The reason for this appears to be that those attacks were about to occur at a fortu-

itous time for the Bush administration, which was facing both a domestic and an international crisis of legitimacy, accompanied by growing cracks in world order under US hegemony in the form of escalating worldwide dissent and protest.

By allowing these terrorist acts to occur, and by apparently pushing a few necessary buttons while closing a few important doors, thus ensuring their occurrence, the Bush administration effectively permitted and supported Al-Qa'ida through its key allies in its September 11 assault (whether the terrorist network knew it or not), thus establishing the trigger so desperately needed to re-assert its power politics worldwide.

Indeed, the measures taken by the Bush administration in the aftermath of September 11 appear to have been specifically tailored to ensure that the increasingly fatal cracks in world order, that had begun to appear both at home and abroad before September 11, did not appear again.

The domestic crackdown on basic civil rights, combined with

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the demonisation of dissent, has come part and parcel with the granting of unlimited war powers, lending the Bush administration a free hand to embark on a new, unlimited war against any regime that challenges US interests.

The protection of a stable dictatorship within Saudi Arabia is also an integral part of this programme of hegemonic consolidation and expansion. The Bush administration apparently feels that as long as the Saudi establishment continues to pour protection money into Al-Qa'ida pockets, the required modicum of regional stability will be maintained, thus protecting unimpeded US access to Middle East oil reserves. Whether or not this policy is viable is another matter, although it seems to have "worked" so far, which probably explains why the Bush administration believes it can continue in this manner, at least for some time further.²

Osama bin Laden's Functional Role within US Foreign Policy

Meanwhile, the scattered continued existence of Al-Qa'ida plays a functional role within world order, at least for the next few years. The *London Guardian* noted this functional role played by Osama bin Laden within the matrix of US foreign policy objectives, in a September 18, 2001 report:

"If Osama bin Laden did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. For the past four years, his name has been invoked whenever a US President has sought to increase the defence budget or wriggle out of arms control treaties. He has been used to justify even President Bush's missile defence programme, though neither he nor his associates [is] known to possess anything approaching ballistic missile technology. Now he has become the personification of evil required to launch a crusade for good: the face behind the faceless terror... [H]is usefulness to western governments lies in his power to terrify. When billions of pounds of military spending are at stake, rogue states and terrorist warlords become assets precisely because they are liabilities."³

The expansion of the misnamed "war on terror" is thus specifically tailored to target regions of strategic and economic interest to the United States...

To consolidate and expand US hegemony, and to counter fully its Russian, Chinese and European rivals, a massive threat is required to establish domestic consensus on the unrelentingly interventionist character of US foreign policy in the new and unlimited "war on terror".

The bogeyman of Osama bin Laden's international terrorist network thus plays, in the view of the Bush administration, a functional role within the matrix of US plans to increasingly subject the world order to its military, political, strategic and economic influence. This explains the Bush administration's systematic failure to investigate known supporters of Al-Qa'ida in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan—and even Al-Qa'ida cells operating within the borders of the United States itself. Whether or not Al-Qa'ida members, including bin Laden himself, are aware of this is another matter.

Until Al-Qa'ida loses this functional role within a US-dominated world order, this state of affairs is likely to continue. At the least, the US government has clearly adopted this array of policies on the basis of a cold but meticulous "cost-benefit" analysis, weighing up the potential gains and losses of the following possible policies:

- Taking meaningful action against Al-Qa'ida, while damaging US regional interests tied to allies who support bin

Laden;

- Allowing allies to continue their support of Al-Qa'ida and refraining from action against it, in order to protect perceived US interests.

The second policy appears to be the one currently adopted by the Bush administration, for the reasons discussed above. It is a policy that amounts, at the very least, to indirect complicity in the September 11 attacks, through ongoing US protection of leading allies supporting those who carried out the attacks. On this basis, it is evident that in the near future, on the pretext of targeting scattered terrorist cells connected to Al-Qa'ida, various countries around the world that are of strategic value to the United States will fall victim to Bush's "new war" for US hegemony.

US Strategic and Economic Interests

The escalating and contrived "clash of civilisations" that may result from this cynical US policy, with the corresponding chaos and destruction, bears ominous implications for the future of humanity.

Indeed, the new pretexts are already being conjured up. President Bush, Jr, virtually declared war on any country deemed by the US to be a threat, in his State of the Union address on Tuesday, January 29, 2002. Bush warned of "thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes", and openly threatened an attack on Iran, Iraq and North Korea in particular. Both the US government and media have made concerted efforts to allege some sort of connection between Al-Qa'ida and the



countries of Iran and Iraq. "By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. States like these and their terrorist allies constitute an Axis of Evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world," Bush added: "The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."

The horrid irony of these statements is clear in light of the documentation presented here concerning the Bush administration's role in the events of September 11, its conscious use of massive terror against the Afghan population, and the accompanying policies of imperialism at home and abroad.

The Middle East and Central Asia together hold over two-thirds of the world's reserves of oil and natural gas. After Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq are respectively the second and third largest oil-producers in the region. Both Iran and Iraq, in accordance with their local interests, are fundamentally opposed to the US drive to secure unimpeded access to regional resources. Iran, for instance, has been attempting to secure its own interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia, thus coming into direct conflict with regional US interests. Iraq has been tolerated for a decade now, only because the US has been unable to replace Saddam Hussein's regime with a viable alternative.⁴ In light of the results of the apparently successful "test case" provided by the war on Afghanistan, the US seems intent on attempting a replay in Iraq by eliminating Saddam and enlisting the opposition to establish a compliant new regime. Similar plans may be in the pipeline for Iran.

As for North Korea, this country borders China and is thus strategically located in terms of longstanding US policy planning. China has long been viewed by US policy planners as its principal rival in North and East Asia. The military network being installed by the United States in the wake of September 11 systematically encircles China—taking in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, India, the Philippines and now Korea.

The *Guardian* has also commented on these developments and their military-strategic context:

"Every twist in the war on terrorism seems to leave a new Pentagon outpost in the Asia-Pacific region, from the former USSR to the Philippines. One of the lasting consequences of the war could be what amounts to a military encirclement of China."

In explanation, the London daily cited the Pentagon's *Quadrennial Defense Review*, warning of the danger that "a military competitor with a formidable resource base will emerge in the region". The journal recommended a US policy that "places a premium on securing additional access and infrastructure agreements".⁵

The expansion of the misnamed "war on terror" is thus specifically tailored to target regions of strategic and economic interest to the United States, and thus to consolidate unrivalled US hegemony in these regions.

Blatant Anomalies

It is worth emphasizing here that even the lowest possible level of involvement on the part of the Bush administration fails to absolve this administration of scandalous responsibility for the events of September 11.

At the very least, the facts on record demonstrate with certainty that the US

government is fully aware that its regional allies Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and some others have funded and supported Al-Qa'ida for years. Yet despite this, the US government has permitted this support to continue, actively obstructing intelligence investigations into the matter and funnelling US aid to the same allies. This policy has continued with the objective of maintaining these lucrative alliances, through which regional US economic and strategic interests are secured.

At the same time, the US government has long been aware of the threat posed by Al-Qa'ida to US national security, and in particular was certainly aware that some sort of devastating attack by Al-Qa'ida on US soil was imminent in the latter half of 2001.

It is a fact that no top WTC executives were killed in the attacks.

Endnotes

1. A typical objection to these conclusions, which attempts to imply that from the outset there is no point in even considering evidence of US complicity in 9-11, posits that the government's allowing—or deliberately provoking—the destruction of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and potentially the White House is *a priori* an impossible scenario due to the potentially uncontrollable ramifications for the world economy and the US as such. This, however, is a disingenuous position based on unwarranted assumptions that the side effect of 9-11 might be uncontrollable. Assuming that the conclusions of this study are correct, it is perfectly conceivable that the government, while anticipating an attack on the WTC, did not at all anticipate that the towers would actually collapse as a consequence. For instance, the architects and engineers who designed the Twin Towers have stated

that the buildings had been designed to withstand nightmare scenarios such as being hit by a plane (although hindsight proves they had not accounted for certain developments related to such scenarios). Prior to the WTC attacks, the architects' assurances would probably have been taken for granted.

It is a fact that no top WTC executives were killed in the attacks. It is a fact that the thousands of victims who were killed in the attacks constitute a fraction of the total number of employees who worked at the WTC.

It is a fact that none of the Pentagon employees who died was a member of the top military establishment. It is a fact that the main hub of the Pentagon can survive even a nuclear attack; the maximum damage caused, and that could have been caused, by the impacting plane was the destruction of a few walls and segments of the building's outer structure, along with the loss of lower-

level Pentagon staff who can be, and have been, easily replaced.

It is a fact that even the total destruction of the White House as a building (unlikely as a consequence of a plane crash, due to its broad and more sturdy structure) would not in reality damage the control and economic wealth of the Bush administration, the oil industry, the defence industry and so on. It is a fact that all key high-level US political officials had their own safety ensured throughout the proceedings of the attacks. It is a fact that the bombing of civilian buildings does not in itself damage the economy.

It is a fact that the increasingly recessive world economy, while badly damaged and freefalling, was already in recession long before September 11 and was set to recede much further regardless of the latter. It is a fact that the economic freefall has come to an end, largely thanks to the indirect impact

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Despite this, the US government refused to reverse its policy of maintaining regional alliances with the principal supporters of Al-Qa'ida, including the funnelling of financial and military aid—and continues to do the same, even after September 11.

At the very least, then, the facts on record demonstrate with certainty an ongoing US policy of wilful and reckless indifference to American lives, motivated fundamentally by strategic and economic interests. This policy has been relentlessly pursued, regardless of the dangers to American lives, of which the US policy-making establishment is fully aware. This policy therefore amounts, even at the lowest possible level of involvement, to deliberate if indirect complicity on the part of the Bush administration in the September 11 attacks.

Although it is the opinion of this author that the documentation gathered strongly indicates the conscious complicity of the Bush administration in the September 11 attacks, it should once again be emphasised that this study does not aim to provide a conclusive or exhaustive analysis. It is primarily intended to collate the innumerable facts surrounding the events of September 11, of which the public is largely unaware, and clarify them with extensive documentation.

These facts have simply not been addressed in an adequate fashion in the media, and the conventional version of events officially espoused by the Bush administration, and slavishly repeated

by the media and academia, fails to account for or explain them. Most commentators, including supposed critics of US policy, are content to dismiss arbitrarily any discussion of the role of the US government in September 11 as irrelevant. But as this study demonstrates, the facts on record are far too important in their implications to be dismissed by anyone who is serious about understanding the events of September 11.

In the final analysis, then, this study points to a host of unanswered questions and blatant anomalies that US government, military and intelligence agencies must be forced to answer through a public inquiry. Such an inquiry is clearly a matter of the greatest urgency, and must be demanded as such by all sectors of society.

The United States government's actions should be transparent, justifiable and reasonable. And in the event of a failure to meet these criteria, the US government should be accountable to the American people. This is a public right and an elementary aspect of democracy. Whether key US figures and institutions have been guilty of complicity or sheer incompetence, the public has a right to know—this is the least that could be done in memory of those who died on September 11.

Thus, a full-scale, independent public inquiry must be launched as soon as possible. Unless this occurs, the truth of what happened on September 11—and thereafter—will remain indefinitely suppressed.

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of September 11, such as the corporate bailout, among other policies, it permitted. It is a fact that the attacks provided an opportunity for the corporate elite to escape the worst effects of this recession, and that, as a consequence, the recession has not had any adverse impact on Bush & Co.

Finally, it is also therefore a fact that if high-level US policy planners had considered allowing or provoking the occurrence of 9-11, they would have certainly taken all this into account and projected that no fundamental damage to the interests of Bush & Co. would occur as long as certain safeguards were taken on their behalf.

2. Other ways of securing US interests in the region in the event that the policy loses its viability, however, are no doubt being explored by US policy planners. (See, for instance: Peters, Ralph, "The Saudi Threat", *Wall Street Journal*, January 4, 2002.)

Indeed, both the US and Saudi governments are certainly cognisant of the dangers inherent in the current arrangement. This appears to be why they have both agreed to visibly discuss the reduction of the US military presence in Saudi Arabia, with the aim of reducing pressure on the Saudi regime from groups, particularly those sympathetic to bin Laden, calling for an end to US occupation there.

White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card, affirming that the Saudis are "wonderful allies in this war against terrorists", admitted that: "Ever since the Gulf War ended, we've been working to try to minimize the amount of time and the size of the footprint that US forces have in Saudi Arabia... They've been

asking a long time, and we've been working with them for a long time—not just during this administration but during previous administrations—to reduce the footprint. I think it's been a long-term interest of both countries... It will happen over time... There is a valuable reason for us to be in that region, but we are looking to reduce the footprint within Saudi Arabia, consistent with America's interests and consistent with the interests of Saudi Arabia." (See CNN, "Saudis ask US to reduce forces, White House admits", January 27, 2002.)

The reduction of the US military presence is designed quite specifically to meet the mutual interests of both the US and the Saudi regime—in terms of the latter's internal stability and continuing rule, and in terms of thereby maintaining the former's regional oil interests. This all ties in with the fact noted by former Saudi Oil Minister, Ahmad Zaki al-Yamani, that the "US has a strategic objective, which is to control the oil of the Caspian sea and to end dependence on the oil of the Gulf". (See ArabicNews.com, "Yamani: importance of Gulf oil collapses in the interests of the Caspian Sea", February 1, 2002, <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/020201/2002020118.html>.)

3. Monbiot, George, "The need for dissent", *The Guardian*, September 18, 2001.

4. See Ahmed, Nafeez M., "The 1991 Gulf Massacre: The Historical and Strategic Context of Western Terrorism in the Gulf", Media Monitors Network, Los Angeles, CA, USA, October 2, 2001, <http://www.media-monitors.net/mosaddeq14.html>.

5. *The Guardian*, January 29, 2002.

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- Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed's book, *The War on Freedom: How and Why America was Attacked, September 11, 2001*, is available as a PDF e-book and also as a paperback book from the website <http://www.thewaronfreedom.com>. See the review in this issue.